



18th Battalion Association

Windsor and Detroit Branch

MEMORIES

At one of our Reunion Dinners some years ago, one of the speakers mentioned Lieut. John Clarke, but placed him in the wrong Company. Lieut. Clarke was the Officer in charge of Thirteen Platoon. The other "D" Company Platoon Officers were Lieut's. Ambery, McIntosh and Dillon. Lieut. Clarke, or Johnny Clarke as most of us called him when he was not around, was one of the best-looking men in the Battalion and one of the many nice Officers we had.

I was one of the small group who ran into Lieut. Clarke shortly after he was wounded. Some of the others, and I know that several of them are still with us, were Hardwick, McQueen, Hamill and Fickley. It was one of those bad nights.

We had all left Vierstraat with different work parties. It was a very dark night and as time went on, some of the work parties became separated and disorganized. Our party was assigned to put up some barbed wire about twenty yards in front of the Line. Most of the men were engaged in screwing the iron posts into the ground while the others came along with coils of barbed wire which they placed in the slots.

After we had finished, we started back and it was then we ran into Lieut. Clarke who had been hit in the face. Whitey Sheridan was with him and we couldn't understand this as Whitey was not even in our Company. We had quite a job persuading the wounded Officer to go back. I believe Whitey went with him.

The rest of us tarried a little too long before starting back overland. We had only gone about half way when the day broke fast, and the machine guns opened fire. We all dove for cover. Hamill and I landed in the same shell hole and we knew we were there for the day. We made ourselves as comfortable as possible. We both had water and rations. It turned out to be a nice day and when the sun came out, it was actually warm.

The shell hole was on a slope and by peering over the edge, we could see the German front line but nothing beyond. We both had a panoramic view of everything behind our own lines. When there was no shelling, it all looked so peaceful. It was strange to have such a wide view and not see a moving object. The woods behind the M & N trenches which had been shelled since the War started, were a mass of broken and split trees with many intertwining broken branches. There was still a lot of green foliage and it seemed to stand with a look of defiance.

When darkness came, we all went on to Vierstraat. When we arrived, I was told to report to the Platoon Officer. I was a L/Corp. at the time. Lieut. McIntosh wanted to know why we didn't return with the others. I explained what had happened and he seemed quite satisfied but told me to go and see Major Emmerton. When I got over there, he wasn't in so I gave the same information to Capt. Loughrin who was also satisfied. He then told the C.S.M. not to assign any of those who had been marooned to any work party that evening.

It was a Night to Remember.